

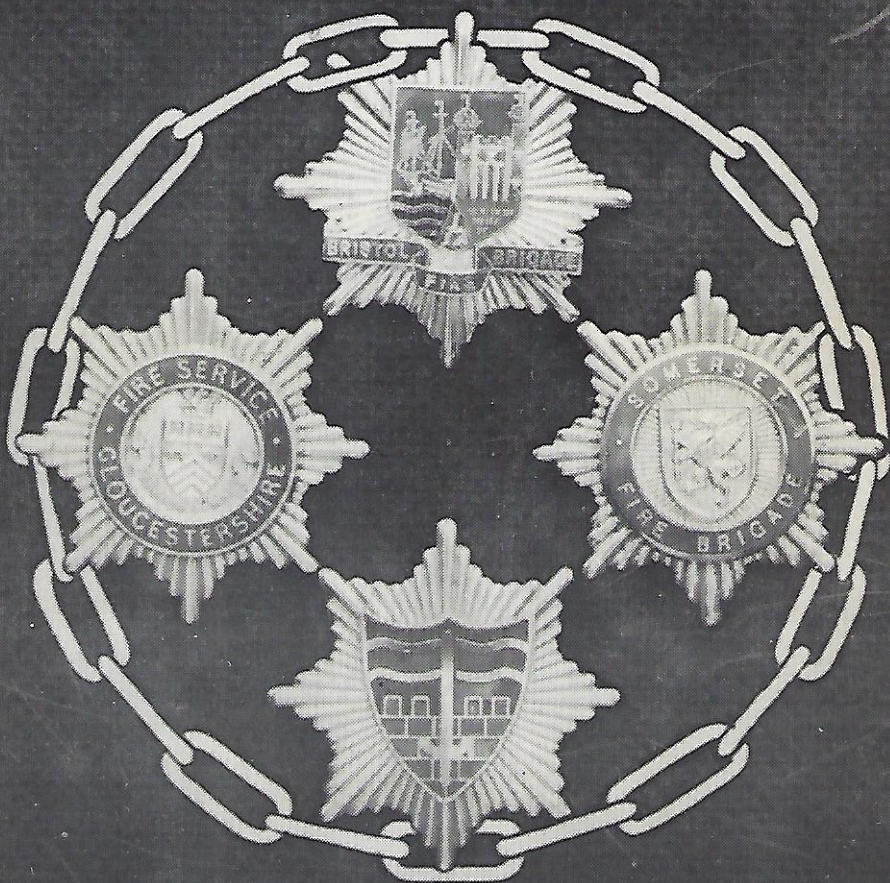


NUMBER 1

WINTER 1974

AVON LINK

THE JOURNAL OF THE COUNTY OF AVON FIRE BRIGADE



Editorial

It is with great trepidation that I write this editorial, which represents my first attempt at "journalism", but I hope that all Brigade members, uniformed and civilian, past and present, together with all friends of the Service, no matter in which manner they have received their copy of this "first issue"; will contribute to other editions.

The magazine committee hope, with your assistance, to make this a true Brigade magazine and would welcome articles from you on any subject that you may feel will be of interest to others. I am hoping that some of you will write to me with views, opinions or statements for possible inclusion in the "Letters to the Editor" page, subject of course to them containing printable material.

Extreme difficulty has been found in obtaining sufficient "copy" for this first issue but we feel sure that this position will rapidly change. This year has been a year of change for all of us, but I feel sure that with the right attitude our problems (and there must be one or two left) can be overcome and we will forget any criticisms of reorganisation and settle down to do the job we do best.

Mel Denman
Editor

The Magazine Committee

Editor:

Mel Denman	- Brigade H.Q.
Colin Morris	- 'A' Division
Tom Jackson	- 'B' Division
John Barnes	- 'C' Division
Gordon Jennings	- Civilian Staff

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Produced by Perry Russell
Public Relations Limited, Bristol
and printed by Woodspring Press
Limited, 5 Elton Road,
Clevedon, Avon.

"The Council of the County of Avon accept no responsibility for any of the statements in the advertisements appearing in this publication, and the inclusion of an advertisement is no indication that the Council approve of the good or service advertised."

Cover design by Nigel Pennecott and Keith Rees both at Station C5 Bedminster shows the four different cap badges currently being worn by members of Avon Fire Brigade.



An Introduction By Chief Fire Officer Tom Lister F.I.Fire E.

I am pleased to write the foreword for our new Brigade magazine "Avon Link". It is important that members of the Brigade, both uniformed and non-uniformed, are made aware of the current activities in all sections of the Brigade, and I welcome the issue of such a publication as a means of bringing together personnel from all parts of the County.

The management committee of the magazine have enthusiastically set about preparing a list of possible "contents" which will ultimately include reports and articles on sporting events, welfare and benevolent fund matters and news and views from stations, in addition to many other features. It will also give me the opportunity of keeping you abreast of developments and trends in the "business" side of the Brigade.

It is now some months since re-organisation took place on April 1st and, although many problems have had to be resolved, I can confidently say that the Brigade is settling down well as a unified and effective organisation.

Our recruiting and training programme for the additional wholetime men required

for the 48-hour week is progressing satisfactorily and we hope to be up to full strength in the not-too-distant future. A number of retained weekend courses have been held at the Brigade training school at Temple Back, which have been very well received, and I would add that when our recruit training commitment has eased, there is likely to be a further extension of centralised retained training at the Brigade School.

On the subject of new appliances, we are in the process of preparing specifications for a rescue tender to replace the existing emergency tender, which is based at Station A1 Temple, and also a canteen van. Some members of the Brigade will have had the opportunity of viewing the new Dodge Water Tender built on a shortened chassis which was recently commissioned into service, and I would like to point out that this type of appliance will be the standard for all future water tenders in the County.

I am pleased that a Brigade magazine has been introduced at an early juncture in the life of the new Brigade and feel confident that it will progress from strength to strength.

Personality Parade

Eric Retires After 34 Years



ERIC SMYTHERS went straight from school to work in a stockbrokers' office, rising to personal assistant. But in August 1940 he left the world of shares and unit trusts to join the fire service as an operational fireman, and it is only now that we say farewell to him on his retirement after 34 years in the service.

He will now have more time to concentrate on his bowls for the Bristol Arrow club and the county, and on his golf, where we hear he once had a very respectable handicap, at present unfortunately increased due to illness.

Promotion came quickly for Mr. Smythers during the war until in December he became a company officer in the accounts section of the finance department responsible for No.7 Section.

In 1948, as a civilian, he was made supplies officer to Hampshire County

Council and in February joined the Bristol Fire Brigade. With the growth of fire prevention, he was responsible for preparing petroleum and explosives licences and was also involved in the preparation of the Factories Act, 1961, and the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963. In June 1973 he became the Senior Administrative Officer of the civilian section of the department.

After 34 years service it is obviously with

(continued on next page)



Mrs. Elaine Wilshire, who was an administrative assistant with the Fire Prevention Department for two years, recently left to take up a new job with the Estates Service at Avon House.

Our photo shows Elaine with DCFO Frederick Ponsford, who presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and a long mirror from her colleagues. We wish her well in her new position.

Eric's Farewell

(from opposite page)

some regret that he is leaving. But he will always be remembered, particularly for his own style of penmanship that is to be observed in the F.P. files. On Aug.9th he finally took his leave when he was presented with an electric wall clock by the Chief Officer. We wish him lots of luck and better health in his retirement.

ED.

It's A Boy!

CONGRATULATIONS to Station Officer Les Redman, of A Division Fire Prevention department, and his wife Janet on the birth of their first child; Nicholas Leslie, a healthy 8lbs. 13oz., who appeared on the scene on June 18. Les and Janet have been married for 17½ years and this is the first addition to the family, with the exception of a rather large boxer named Peregrine.

NEW STYLE ENGINE JOINS BRIGADE

THE Brigade's new water/ladder tender costing about £11,500 went on the run at Station A1 Temple, Bristol, at the beginning of September.

It is hoped that all future appliances will be based on this model and that the stowing of equipment throughout the Brigade will be similar to those in the new tender.

The machine complied fully with the Joint Council for Development and Design specifications and the design was the result of consultation with the Brigade technical committee.

The body was built by HCB Angus on a Dodge K8-50 chasis with a specially shortened (126") wheelbase. The Perkins V8 diesel/engine develops 170 bhp at 2,800 rpm, and this is coupled to a Coventry Climax MK8, 600 gpm pump, with a 20 gpm round-the-pump foam proportioner built in. In conjunction a Jet-

(continued on next page)





Deputy Chief Is Made An M.B.E.

Mr. Frederick Ponsford, deputy chief of the Brigade, was made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in the summer.

Mr. Ponsford, who joined the NFS in Gloucester in 1947, was appointed deputy chief of the Bristol Brigade in 1970, taking over the Avon post in April this year. Before joining the fire service Mr. Ponsford was a staff sergeant with the Glider Pilot Regiment.

New Tender

(from page 8)

master can be used when attached to the power take-off.

Priming the pump is by water ring with a 2-gallon header tank which will take anti-freeze in cold weather. The water tanks holds 400 gallons.

A six-speed, all-synchromesh gearbox provides power to the rear wheels by a single-speed 5.7:1 rear axle, giving the machine speeds over 70 mph.

Power steering makes for easier driving in traffic and the brakes are air-over-hydraulic with a spring-actuated parking brake.

The total cost is ex. equipment but includes an Angus 464 triple extension ladder which can be easily exchanged to a 35' Ajax ladder.

LOOKING BACK

by Maureen Cox.

*Flames of yellow, red and blue,
As a child I worshipped you;
Never saw the danger near,
Never felt a sense of fear.*

*Rockets soaring in the sky,
Rainbow fountains surging high;
Catherine wheels tied to a post,
I know not which I loved the most.*

*How can I tell a child like you -
'Beware of flames of varied hue!'
You see life through a child's eye,
You see beauty, as once did I.*

*Was it an empty case I'd found,
Lying so lifeless on the ground?
I bent to look a flash of light,
- Gone forever was my sight.*

*Flames of yellow, red and blue,
As a child I worshipped you;
Never saw the danger near,
Never felt a sense of fear*

Spotlight on the Stations

No.1 BANWELL manned by Nine Strong Volunteers

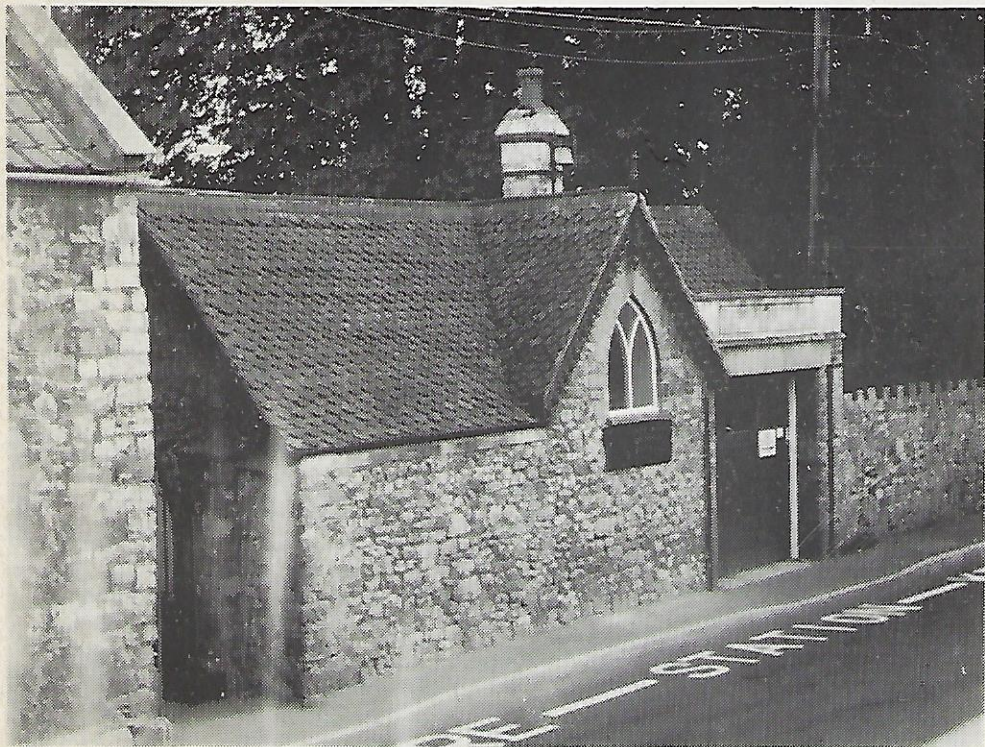
THE formation of the new Brigade has brought together a wide variety of buildings ranging from the modern complex of "Temple" to the smaller and equally interesting premises, acquired or built by their former authorities.

Fire Stations are next only to Fire engines in the interest shown by members of the public, not only to the toddlers but also to the more senior citizens.

To enable all members of Avon to have an appreciation of the stations forming the Brigade the editorial staff have decided to feature a different station in each issue.

In rural life fire stations are very much a centre in the community and Banwell Station provided no exception. The people of the village are extremely proud of their voluntary fire brigade and the locals are quite willing to natter about fires that have occurred over the years.

On 19th December 1887 the "Engine House" was presented to the parish, by a



The exterior of the Banwell Station

Miss Fazakerly who was at that time the occupier of Banwell Abbey. Miss Fazakerly, who hailed from Fazakerly Hall, Lancashire, had a great interest in the Brigade and was possibly the first Firewoman as it is said that she possessed a uniform.

The single storey 'L' shaped building was originally a cottage at the gate to the Abbey and is constructed of brick and stone with a tiled roof.

The appliance room measures 25' x 9' with a parade room 18' x 11' attached, at the rear is a walled garden. A bell provided on the roof was originally used to summon members of the Brigade.

Currently during the waking hours the call out system is by means of a G.P.O. exchange line to one of the local inhabitants who on receiving a call makes haste to the Station to operate the electric siren.

In accordance with Brigade policy alterers will be provided at a future date.

The 'Manual' in the photograph is still in the village and was given to the parish by 'one of the Emery's in 1810, and replaced

two 'Thatch Anchores' now on display in Weston Museum.

In researching this article I was fortunate to make contact with Mr. D. Day who served for 40 years with the Brigade. Currently he runs a hardware shop in the village and kindly loaned me a minute book recording meetings, drills and fires that occurred during the period 1905-1936. Mr. David Bromwich a librarian at Taunton was also very helpful in the supply of cuttings and following are some extracts.

Aug 28 1905

Resolved to pay the Annual Subscription to the National F.B.U. of £1.1.0.

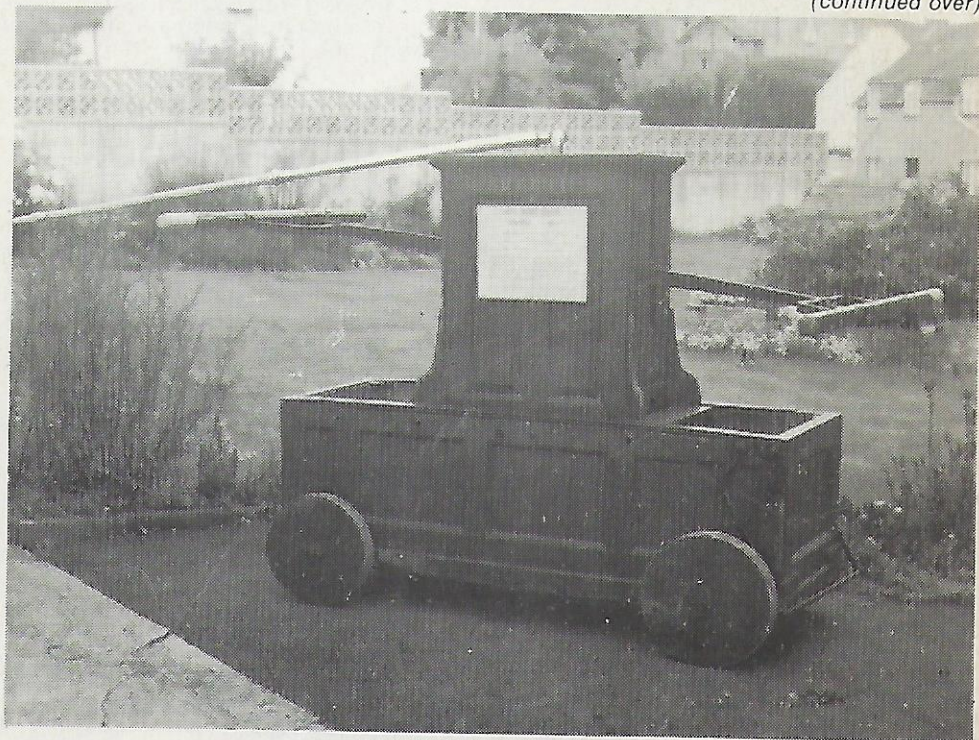
Aug 28 1905

A kit inspection to be held annually a fortnight before November 5th.

July 29 1906

Captain and six men were called to a hay mow fire at Harris's Farm. Mr. David Harris supplied one horse to pull the pump and Capt. Castle the other.

(continued over)



The 1810 Manual Engine

(from Page 11)

Aug 8 4 a.m.

Hay mow fire at Wick St. Lawrence. This took 9 hours to extinguish and the account rendered to the Alliance Assurance Co., was as follows: Horses £2.0.0., Engine £3.0.0., Capt. and men £6.0.0., pumpers £1.0.0., (2/6d each).

The members attending the meeting held on Nov. 11th 1906 invited Mr. M. Rich to accept the Lieutenancy of the Brigade. In his speech of acceptance he thanked the members for the honour. "Fm. J. Thomas responded for his Brother Firemen and proposed the health of the Officers which were drunk with Musical Honours."

Jan 16 1907

Resolved to provide each member with 16 yards of best life line.

Aug 8 1907

Fm. Stephens attended without uniform, and refused to drill at the command of Capt. Rich. About this time Fm. J. Thomas who had met with an accident whilst drilling received £4.10.0 from the Insurance Co., in settlement.

May 25 1908

A very pleasant annual outing was held at Ilfracombe. The members returning home about 11-30 in "formal condition".

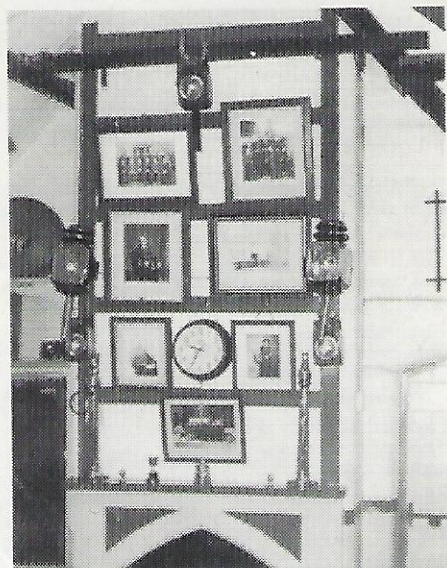
A fire at Banwell Castle (1910) necessitated the services of 48 "pumpers" in addition to the Brigade.

Aug 1914

Due to the war it was unanimously decided to forego the annual outing and contribute the money towards purchase of a new appliance as directed by the Red Cross Society.

Returning from the past the Station continues to be run on a voluntary basis although payments are made for drills and the attendance at incidents. The total strength numbers nine and is under the command of Sub. O. P.E. Gait.

A 1970 Ford Transit Hose Reel Tender is the appliance allocated and carries 90



Souvenirs of the past in the Banwell Station

gallons of water and is fitted with one hose reel supplying water via a Light Portable Pump which can be used either on or off the appliance.

A New Book

A very interesting and informative book "Fire Engines in Colour" by Arthur Ingram/Dennis Bishop and published by Blandford Press Ltd., is currently available price £1.75. It is well illustrated and deals with development from the days of the Squire to present day.

In addition to text illustrations there are 96 pages of colour illustrations showing 200 machines from Britain, the U.S.A., Western/Eastern Europe and Japan.

Hook ladders and Fire Marks are also featured.

Promises! Promises!

A Cologne woman who promised an "ecstatic night of lovemaking" to the man who found her lost Yorkshire terrier had the dog returned—by the local Fire Brigade. Apparently there were so many firemen that they decided to accept a round of drinks instead.

The Girl With The Golden Voice

It is appropriate that the first personality to feature on this page should be the person whom most people know.

But "know" is perhaps overstating the case. Many people, both in the service and outside it, only know Shirley Ann Greig by her voice as the girl behind the switchboard and the frosted glass reception window.

For the brigade she is the first line of communication and her dulcet tones are often to be heard requesting "Mr. Hook to contact the switchboard"; "Mr. Hook to ring 272"; "Mr. Hook to ring 291"; "Mr. Hook to"

Shirley has worked at Brigade H.Q. for about a year, and before that as a receptionist at the Central Health Clinic. She

lives in Henbury with her husband Martin who is catering manager with a local entertainments organisation.

And food seems to be one of the main pre-occupations of the family: Shirley's mother-in-law Mrs. Betty Greig is a cook at Brigade H.Q. and formerly at Station A2.

Shirley lists her hobbies as reading and, more recently, gliding, to which friends introduced her at St. Mawgan in Cornwall. She says she is so enthusiastic about the sport she is considering "taking it up" seriously. Perhaps they ought to leave the automatic pilot on for a few flights yet.



John Wayne Makes It Look Easy!

NO need not to feel completely confident, after all John Wayne didn't have any difficulty and as I saw at Moreton, Gregory Peck managed a similar situation with ease.

It seems to me that it is the initial encounter that is so very important, appear confident and they will be eating out of my hand.

Wayne and Peck must have used a similar horse-feeding analogy when they moulded an efficient team from what was originally an untrained, undisciplined collection of men. Let's face facts what have I to fear from these Weston lads, here I am fairly experienced, an old Bridewell man, Jack Roe trained etc., bound to be far superior than these country lads. Putting it in as kindly and generous a fashion as possible how can they hope to match their knowledge against a Bristol veteran like myself.

Parade, the line-up is the same so that's alright—wait a minute though, where are all the men?—mad panic!—half the watch seem to be missing—Oh God! my first morning too. "What's that you are saying Leading Fireman about retained men making up the numbers? I'm not used to a situation like this perhaps if I leave it to you, you will sort it all out."—Many thanks.—

"Let's have a quick cup of tea, then we can begin drill"—no tea at this station—the situation worsens by the minute.

Anyway drill now, this will separate the real professional from the learners, I will have to be prepared to accept just second-best from them for a while—plenty of time to tighten the screw later.

'Accident unit to work'—mm!, they certainly know the ropes here, moving like clockwork. Reassuring words, trouble is the words are issued from them to me, "Never mind Sub, we'll put you right if we get a working job."

'Right lads get the escape out', this is where I really shine, the speed alone with which I run an escape should astound them. One of the best at training school,—expert at carry down. What's this they are saying, no escapes, Laycon Ladder instead—what the hell is that? Vague memories from old manual reading come dimly to my befuddled brain—"some brigades use these ladders instead of escapes." OK! well get it to work instead, must keep calm before them.

These lads handle it well, frightens me to death, looks top-heavy, and I thought that even a 35ft. was heavy.

My star-turn, now to show them what speed in ladder work really is,—Up I go, left hand, left foot, right hand—faster faster,—What's that they are shouting? I'd better stop and descend.

"Thank you lads for explaining that point to me, it certainly does seem very obvious to me now that running a Laycon is a dangerous practice, I definitely agree with you that it could cause an accident."—Was it my imagination or were they smirking, a few technical questions will soon correct that impression.

Turntable Ladders, surely here they will be lacking? Let's face facts, grass fires, haystacks and thatch are more their province.

"Could you briefly describe the operation of a turntable ladder?"

The answer flows out like silk, smooth without a trace of effort.

"It rather depends Sub-Officer on the type you are trying to signify, the comparable qualities of the Magirus, Merryweather and this, depending greatly upon the bevel-driving—"

OK lads break off for tea, I know that's something that we really can amalgamate in.

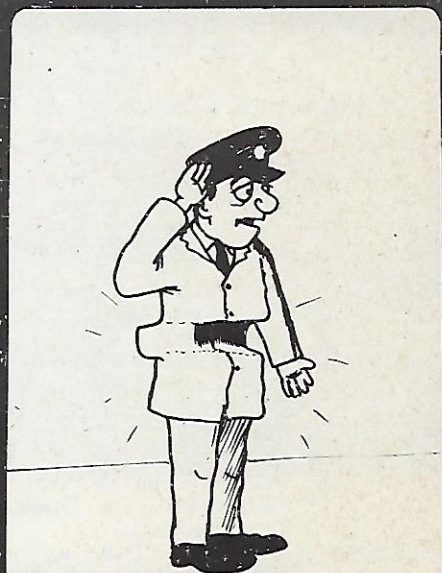
Anonymous
Sub. Officer



LADDER TEST COMPLETE SIR!



I RECON THIS ACTING RANK HAS
GONE TO HIS HEAD!



THE "EVEREST" HAS JAMMED SIR!

Some Thoughts on Women's Lib.

"Liz" Taylor
Brigade Control

I hear you male readers sighing already: 'Here it comes again—Women's Lib.' Not the organised bra-burning however, but a variation on the theme. I've given some thought to the subject of the liberation of women, how it came about, and with what help.

What women have mainly been liberated from is, it now seems, the narrow world of home and family. Today we can enjoy the best of two worlds: a husband, a home and a family which comes along more by design than accident. And what woman does not want these precious things?

But we are also welcomed outside the home, working in jobs alongside our male 'equals'.

How did this come about? I suppose it started from necessity, particularly in war-time, when women proved they could do jobs nobody had hitherto thought them capable of. And so after the war many women were no longer content to stay at home.

But let's be honest, girls, we've had a lot

of help towards liberation from the home, by the boys. Look around at the labour-saving gadgets that many of us now have, which MUST have been invented by men.

The law now says we must be paid equal wages for equal work. Advocated by women for years and long overdue? Agreed—but it was the unions who did the real spade work, and most of the officials there are men. And then at parliament there are surely more Harolds and Teds than Barbaras.

To conclude what are purely personal views, I'm all for women's lib AS FAR AS IT HAS GONE. Leave the wearing of trousers to the men and fellas, how about leaving the long hair to the girls?

We do have equality where it counts—in the commercial world. But vive la difference in the personal world.

Brigade Diary

- October 29: Brigade band plays at St. Andhelms E.P. Club, Bedminster 7.15 p.m.
- November 1: Grand Ball at Somerset Hall, Portishead, in aid of FSNBF. (Organised by Station C.3. Portishead).
- November 2: Firework display at Nailsea in aid of FSNBF. (Organised by Station C.11 Nailsea).
- November 9: Firework Display at Blagdon in aid of FSNBF. (Organised by Station C.7 Blagdon).
- November 13: Brigade Military Band plays at Beechwood E.P. Club, Fishponds, 7.15 p.m.

- November 30: Dance at The Memorial Hall, Farrington Gurney. (Organised by B 3 Paulton).
- December 11: Brigade Military Band plays at Brentry Hospital, Westbury-on-Trym, 7.15 p.m.
- December 16: Christmas Draw at Station C.1 Weston-super-Mare in aid of FSNBF.

Letters Page

Dear Sir,

Has anyone seen a smaller operational Fire Station? This one sited in the main street of Borth just north of Aberstwyth measures approximately 11' x 9' and houses a trailer pump. Note the lamp standard.

A.D.O. John Barnes
'C' Division, H.Q.

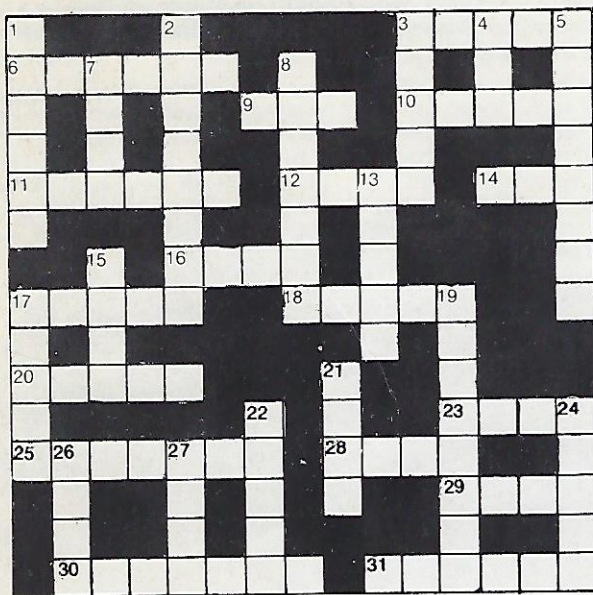


—The Editor welcomes letters which should be addressed to him at Avon Fire Brigade Headquarters, Temple Back, Bristol.

IN this first issue of the brigade magazine we have not been able to include—with the exception of the crossword below—a Competitions Section.

Several suggestions designed to spur the competitive spirit have been made and we would like readers to send in their own suggestions. Any competition must have a prize and so a small entry fee will be charged; with sufficient interest we could offer worthwhile prizes.

So please send your suggestions to the Editor.



ACROSS

- 3 Short but penetrating
- 6 SO_2 and Fe_2O_3 are two!
- 9 Prefix for a lot of Zeros.
- 10 The lesser of three evils.
- 11 Not the lip of the step?
- 12 Expressed in feet. Thats odd.
- 14 Not the engine for us!
- 16 Red from a tube of this.
- 17 Depth of tread?
- 18 Currently, the way back.
- 20 Where there's water in the bottom.
- 23 Measures the dose!
- 25 Pump or primer?
- 28 Follows Oscar to Quebec.
- 29 Fine change for light.
- 30 Almost a whisky a gauge may need.
- 31 Beaten to make fast.

DOWN

- 1 Getting to grips at the top.
- 2 From crude to smooth.
- 3 30 D.P.M.!
- 4 Around Pam to find the way.
- 5 M or F.
- 7 Atom power?
- 8 High Speed?
- 13 Be this!
- 15 Bottom of the access.
- 17 Not Clarke's end.
- 19 Finding them can be a problem.
- 21 Civvy line.
- 22 A Division.
- 24 Use with care.
- 26 Sounds like traffic problems at the door.
- 27 Mystery or duty?

Entries to the Editor with your name and address.

Compiled by R.A. McInnes/G.E. Pratten, B.E. Speedwell.

The first two all correct entries opened after November 20th will each receive 2 theatre tickets for the Theatre Royal or New Vic Theatre for any show during the next three months.